Met Office

August 2012

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

UK overview

The weather was mainly influenced by low pressure over or to the west of the UK, bringing cloudy conditions and showers or longer periods of rain on many days especially in the west and north. The south-east of England saw the driest and warmest weather.

The UK mean temperature was 0.4 °C above the 1981-2010 average. It was a wet month in south-west England and south Wales and in northern England, southern and eastern Scotland, with a few areas having over twice the average rainfall. In contrast, parts of East Anglia, south-east England and north-west Scotland were drier than normal. Many areas were somewhat duller than usual, the sunnier exceptions being Northern Ireland and the western side of Scotland.

A maximum temperature of 32.4 °C was recorded at Cavendish (Suffolk) on the 18th, the highest UK temperature of the year. A minimum temperature of -2.5 °C was recorded at Cromdale (Highland) early on the 31st. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 on the 30th, 84.6 mm of rain fell at Thirlmere (Cumbria). A wind gust of 64 mph was recorded at South Uist (Western Isles) during the 27th.

Weather impacts

Slow-moving thundery downpours on the 5th caused localised flooding of properties and travel disruption in various parts of England, Wales and Scotland. Worst hit were Pembrokeshire, Cheshire, Devon, Tyneside and the Scottish Borders. Heavy showers led to further flooding in Tyneside on the 6th.

However, the Olympic events in SE England in early August enjoyed largely fine, dry conditions.

Further downpours caused localised surface flooding of roads in Wales and SW England on the 16th, in NW Scotland on the 22nd and parts of Lancashire on the 23rd. Bank Holiday Monday (27th) saw further rain across many western areas. Prolonged heavy rain in Cumbria on the 29th led to some localised flooding of properties and a landslip on a rail line in west Cumbria.

It was reported that the generally wet and cloudy summer weather had adversely affected the yield of many fruit, vegetable and cereal crops.

England diary of highlights

The weather was mainly influenced by low pressure bringing cloudy conditions with showers or longer spells of rain on many days, especially to the north and west. Counties towards the south-east saw more dry warm weather, and a brief hot spell in the third week.

The mean temperature was 0.4 °C above the 1981-2010 average. It was wetter than normal in many western and northern areas, with parts of south-west England and northern England having over twice the average. In contrast, it was drier than normal in south-east England and East Anglia, with about half the normal amount close to the Thames estuary. Sunshine was mostly below normal, but nearer normal in the east.

1st to 6th:

An area of low pressure was located to the west of the UK, bringing rather cool, showery conditions; some of the showers were heavy and thundery. On 5th, totals exceeded 20 mm in parts of the west and north, with 32.8 mm at Westonbirt (Gloucestershire) and 38.2 mm at Bradford (West Yorkshire).

7th to 11th:

As the low pressure moved away across the North Sea, high pressure built in to become centred over the UK on 9th and 10th. However, there were still some showers on 7th and 8th. Low cloud, mist and fog formed on the night of 8th, clearing during the morning of 9th to leave a dry, warm and sunny day; temperatures rose above 25 °C across much of the south and east with 27.8 °C at St James's Park (Greater London). It remained fine on 10th, with temperatures again widely above 25 °C, and on 11th.

12th to 17th:

A good deal of fine, rather warm weather remained in the south-east, but thunderstorms broke out in some northern and western areas on 12th. Then it turned more generally unsettled, with low pressure systems bringing bands of rain, heavy showers and some thunderstorms. The 15th was wet across many western, central and northern areas, with over 15 mm in places and 29.2 mm at Weymouth (Dorset).

18th to 19th:

Over the weekend of 18th and 19th, the south-east and East Anglia largely avoided the cloud and showers in other parts of the country, and in a southerly flow temperatures rose to around 30 °C widely across the east and south-east with 32.4 °C at Cavendish (Suffolk) on 18th.

20th to 25th:

Low pressure to the west brought some rain and heavy showers at times to the north and west. The south and east largely escaped, although it was cooler than of late here. Periods of rain spread eastwards on 24th followed by showers on 25th, becoming heavy and prolonged.

26th to 31st:

The north-west/south-east divide continued, with the south-east staying largely fine and dry, and more unsettled conditions elsewhere. Some more prolonged rain spread eastwards on 29th, giving large totals in the west and north including 42.6 mm in 24 hours from 0900 on 29th at St Bees Head (Cumbria). Pressure then rose, and the night of 30th / 31st was clear and particularly cold with record low minima for August at some stations; -0.7 °C was recorded at Redesdale Camp (Northumberland).

Wales diary of highlights

A mainly changeable month, with showers or longer periods of rain on many days. There were occasional warmer, settled days most notably in the second week.

The mean temperature was 0.5 °C above the 1981-2010 average and it was the warmest August since 2004. Rainfall was generally close to normal in the north-east, but it was wetter than normal elsewhere with about 150% of average in parts of the south. The number of days with rain was the fourth highest for August in the last 50 years. Sunshine amounts were generally below normal.

1st to 6th:

The first week was unsettled with low pressure dominating and a series of fronts crossing Wales. Heavy rain affected many areas on 1st, with 16.3 mm recorded at Llandeilo (Carmarthenshire). Conditions turned more showery from 2nd with sunny spells and some heavy showers, also some longer spells of rain and occasional thunder.

7th to 13th:

Pressure rose from 7th to 10th. Mainly light rain affected many areas on 7th and 8th with mist and hill fog, but it turned brighter in the north on 8th. It became mainly dry and sunnier from 9th to 11th, although with mist and low cloud at night, persisting near some coasts. A maximum of 24.9 °C was recorded at Valley (Anglesey) on 11th. A brisk south-easterly breeze developed later, and fronts began bringing showers and some longer periods of rain on 12th. Thunderstorms were reported in the south in the early hours, and in the north later in the day. A band of rain, occasionally heavy, spread eastwards on 13th as pressure continued to fall.

14th to 23rd:

It was unsettled with low pressure and associated fronts dominating. The 14th was mainly dry until later, but 15th became wet with heavy rain or showers, and windy in the west. It became drier for a time on 16th, but further rain arrived later. A rather warm day on 17th but with heavy rain at times and strong south-westerly winds; many places saw in excess of 20 mm of rain and 36.2 mm fell at Capel Curig (Conwy). Further rain moved north-eastwards on 18th and 19th, and only cleared to brighter weather on 20th. Sunny spells with a few showers on 21st with slightly fresher south-westerly winds developing. The 22nd and 23rd were largely dry with some sunshine and a few showers in the west, and south-westerly breezes.

24th to 31st:

Pressure fell on 24th as a band of rain spread eastwards after a largely dry start, the rain turning heavy and persistent later with some torrential thundery spells. The 25th brought further heavy and occasionally prolonged showers, some thundery. The 26th became mainly dry and sunny under a weak ridge. Further rain, sometimes heavy in the west, spread in on 27th with strong southerly winds. This cleared overnight, to leave a brighter day with a few showers on 28th. Further bands of heavy rain or thundery showers spread eastwards on 29th with gusty winds. Although a few showers fell on 30th, it became drier and brighter. A ridge developed on 31st, which was largely dry and sunny after a chilly night inland, with a minimum of 1.8 °C at Sennybridge (Powys). Cloud increased later in the day with a few spots of rain by dusk.

Scotland diary of highlights

A mainly changeable month, with showers or longer periods of rain on many days and only one warm settled spell.

The mean temperature was 0.4 °C above the 1981-2010 average. It was wetter than normal across parts of eastern and southern Scotland, with twice the average amount in a few locations. In contrast, parts of the north-west Highlands were somewhat drier than normal. Sunshine totals were above normal in the western Highlands but it was somewhat duller than usual near the east coast and in the northern Isles.

1st to 7th:

Showers on 1st, the heaviest in Argyll and the Central Highlands. These cleared overnight, and on 2nd and 3rd showers were more scattered and less frequent, mainly affecting the far north and west with temperatures over 20 °C in parts of the north and east on 3rd; 22.8 °C was recorded at Achnagart (Highland). The 4th started bright, but heavy showers with thunder developed during the afternoon in most areas with only the far north escaping. The unsettled theme continued on 5th with heavy thundery showers for central and southern areas, the Borders and Lothians seeing the heaviest. The 6th again saw some heavy showers with thunder for West Fife and Perthshire, but on 7th the showers were more scattered with only Angus and Aberdeenshire affected.

8th to 11th:

It was fine and settled with sunny spells and temperatures in the mid-20s for many; Eskdalemuir (Dumfries and Galloway) reached 25.9 °C on 10th.

12th to 23rd:

The 12th saw changes for south-western areas with showers developing in the afternoon, and the unsettled weather continued on 13th when the north-west had rain while southern and western areas had scattered showers. After a bright start on 14th, showers developed during the afternoon with thunder for Perthshire and the Central Highlands, although the showers eased overnight. The 15th started bright but rain, accompanied by a strong south-easterly wind, spread from the south-west to reach southern areas by mid-afternoon and continued northwards during the evening; however, temperatures still reached the low-20s in many areas. The 16th saw sunny spells in the morning, but showers with occasional thunder developed mainly for the Borders and Central Belt in the afternoon. The 17th started wet but the rain cleared to the east during the afternoon, and although 18th started with some showers in the Western Isles it was generally a bright and dry day with temperatures reaching the mid-20s in Moray and Aberdeenshire. The 19th started dry and bright but rain spread from the south in the morning to reach all but the far north by evening, clearing overnight to leave a day of scattered showers on 20th with thunder in the far north. Another day of scattered showers on 21st, with the heaviest in Fife and Moray where there was also thunder. Shetland saw persistent heavy rain overnight, with 64.2 mm recorded at Lerwick by 0900 on 22nd. Lighter, more scattered showers followed on 22nd and 23rd.

24th to 31st:

On 24th a rain band spread from the south during the morning, reaching the far north late in the day and clearing early on 25th to leave another showery day. The 26th saw more sunshine for most areas, but rain spread from the south-west during the late afternoon and overnight to give most areas a wet day on 27th with some unseasonably strong winds for the north-west; a gust of 64 mph was recorded at South Uist (Western Isles). The 28th started bright, but showers broke out in western areas during the afternoon, becoming heavier and more widespread on 29th with thunder for many areas and 23.2 mm rain at Gogarbank (Edinburgh). An improvement on 30th, to a generally dry and bright day. An unusually cold night followed, with an air frost in places and -2.5 °C at Cromdale (Highland). Although 31st started bright in the east, rain spread from the west to reach all areas by the afternoon.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

The month was dominated by low pressure bringing cloudy conditions with showers or longer spells of rain on many days. The only warm, settled spell was in the second week.

The mean temperature was 0.8 °C above the 1981-2010 average, making it the warmest August since 2004. Rainfall amounts were somewhat above normal generally. Northern and western areas were somewhat sunnier than usual.

1st to 4th:

A generally bright start on 1st although a band of showers spread from the west during the afternoon, clearing overnight to leave a generally drier and brighter day on 2nd but showers developed in western areas in the afternoon. The 3rd was a day of sunshine and light showers for northern areas but heavier showers with thunder affected southern and western areas on 4th.

5th to 11th:

The 5th saw a band of showers for eastern areas in the morning clearing to leave a generally dry and sunny afternoon, and this improvement continued on 6th with a dry, bright day. The showers returned on 7th mainly for central and north-eastern areas, clearing overnight to leave a dry, bright day on 8th. Dry, sunny weather

continued until 11th, with temperatures in the low 20s for most and Lough Navar Forest (County Fermanagh) recording 26.1 °C on 10th.

12th to 31st:

The 12th saw a change to rain or showers for most areas. On 13th the showers became lighter and more scattered, but 14th saw a return to widespread heavy showers and thunder for some central areas. The 15th was bright before rain spread from the south-west during the afternoon, reaching all areas by evening with some heavy pulses, Stormont (County Antrim) having 16.6 mm in one hour during the afternoon and 32.2 mm for the day. The rain cleared overnight to give a bright start to 16th before some heavy showers developed during the afternoon with thunder mainly for central areas. The 17th was generally drier and brighter although a narrow band of showers moved north-eastwards during the morning and an area of rain affected central areas during the evening. This cleared overnight to leave dry and bright days on 18th and 19th although later some heavy showers developed in north-western areas. The 20th was a similar day with a bright start, though some heavy but scattered showers developed for central areas during the afternoon. This pattern continued on 21st with a band of heavy showers spreading north-eastwards during the morning, with thunder for County Antrim. The showers were more scattered but still heavy on 22nd with thunder again for eastern areas, and the heavy showers continued on 23rd. On 24th the showers were generally lighter and more scattered. The 25th saw fewer showers again and this improving trend continued into 26th with a mainly dry day with sunny spells. Rain moved eastwards overnight to clear during the morning to leave a generally bright day on 27th, and although 28th saw a few scattered showers it was generally another bright day. However 29th saw the return of heavy showers with thunder for eastern areas. The 30th was a largely dry day with sunny spells, but on 31st rain spread from the west during the morning to reach all areas by mid-afternoon.

Last updated: 27 November 2013

Met Office